

tration's commitment to children, and in particular, it follows Hillary's work over the years on issues relating to early childhood development.

The conference will examine how we can use this new research in practical ways—to be better parents, more informed caregivers, and more responsive members of our communities. It will also explore how this information can be used by all members of our society—from corporate executives to pediatricians, from ministers to elected officials—to help strengthen America's families.

Parents desperately want to do right by their children, and we all have a role to play in making sure they have the tools they need to do the best job they can. We believe this conference can make a valuable contribution.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Narcotics Certification for Mexico

March 13, 1997

Today's vote by the House of Representatives on Mexico is the wrong way to continue and deepen the unprecedented cooperation we are getting from Mexico in the war on drugs and the wrong way to protect the interests of the American people.

We all seek the same goal: to keep drugs out of America's neighborhoods and away from our children. Accomplishing that goal requires that we work closely with nations that share our objective of halting the flow of illegal narcotics, especially with the one country in the hemisphere whose 2,000 mile border with the United States makes it a ready target of the traffickers seeking to smuggle their contraband into the United States.

I certified Mexico because in the last year, we have achieved an unprecedented level of cooperation on counternarcotics, because Mexico has taken concrete steps on its own to fight drug trafficking, and because certification is the best way to make sure that Mexico's cooperation and antidrug efforts grow even stronger.

Under President Zedillo's leadership, Mexico broke new ground by extraditing two of its citizens to the United States and expel-

ling drug kingpin Juan Garcia Abrego, who is now behind bars in an American prison for life. Our military cooperation has improved dramatically as we have expanded antidrug training and assistance on drug interdiction.

Moreover, Mexico has taken the initiative by itself: Drug seizures, arrests, crop eradication, and the destruction of drug labs and runaways in Mexico have all increased. New laws to combat organized crime and money laundering have been enacted. And the Zedillo administration immediately arrested and prosecuted its drug czar when they discovered he had been corrupted by a major drug ring.

President Zedillo recognizes the enormity of the problem Mexico faces, and he has been courageous in carrying this battle forward. He deserves our support, not a vote of "no confidence" that will only make it more difficult for him to work with us and defeat the scourge of drugs.

I will continue to work with Congress to ensure that legislation that would undermine progress we have made with Mexico does not become law.

Memorandum on National Testing in Defense Department Schools

March 13, 1997

Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense

Subject: Participation of Department of Defense Dependents Schools and Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools in National Testing

The Department of Defense Dependents Schools overseas and the Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools here at home play an important role in enhancing the quality of life and overall readiness of the Armed Forces of the United States. They provide military families deployed overseas and within the United States with outstanding educational opportunities, and they play a vital role in preparing the children of military and civilian personnel in the Armed Forces for the future.

Students in these schools deserve the best we can offer, starting with the highest expectations and most challenging academic stand-

ards available. Drawn from all racial and ethnic backgrounds, located in 15 countries throughout the world and in seven States and Puerto Rico here at home, all highly mobile, no group of students better underscores the need for common national standards and a uniform way of measuring progress.

That is why I am pleased the Department of Defense Dependents Schools and Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools have accepted the challenge of benchmarking the performance of their students against widely accepted national standards in fourth grade reading and eighth grade math, using voluntary national tests aligned with these standards. This step will ensure that students, parents, and teachers in the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) schools will have honest, accurate information about whether students are mastering the basic skills. Along with the States of Maryland, Michigan, and North Carolina, the DoDEA schools are among the first in the Nation to commit to participate in this testing program, beginning in 1999.

Accepting this challenge of meeting national standards means much more than administering new tests. It means beginning immediately to prepare students to meet these standards. This will require steps such as providing parents with the information and assistance they need to be their child's first teacher, upgrading the curriculum, implementing proven instructional practices and programs, making accessible new technologies to enhance teaching and learning, supporting and rewarding good teaching, and providing students who need it with extra help and tutoring.

The DoDEA schools have already begun this task, but much more needs to be done. And the lessons the DoDEA schools learn from these efforts can be valuable for other schools throughout our Nation.

Therefore I direct you to ensure that the DoDEA schools take these and other steps as appropriate, and use all available resources to prepare every one of their students to meet these standards, in 1999 and each year thereafter, and to report annually on the progress being made toward this objective, and on the effectiveness of the strategies and

approaches the DoDEA school system uses to achieve it.

William J. Clinton

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Dinner in Aventura, Florida

March 13, 1997

Thank you very much. I have these elaborate notes I just wrote out. *[Laughter]* I am so glad to be here. I believe Senator Graham and Lieutenant Governor MacKay and Senator Torricelli. I tried to get Bob to say that so many of you were glad he was here so you could hear someone speak without an accent. *[Laughter]* I believe this is the first time I have been to Florida to give a public speech since the election, and so let me begin by saying, thank you, thank you, thank you.

This has been a wonderful day for me. I began by going to North Carolina to speak to the North Carolina Legislature about education and welfare reform. And Governor Jim Hunt of North Carolina was the Governor of North Carolina in 1979, when Bob Graham was the Governor of Florida, and the Secretary of Education, Dick Riley, was the Governor of South Carolina, and I was the Governor of Arkansas. And we had all these wonderful ideas, and we were very young. And I have been friends with Bob and Adele for a long time, and I'm honored to be here in their behalf tonight.

I thank Senator Torricelli for being here. Senator Harkin, I thank him for coming. Lieutenant Governor MacKay, thank you very much. Somebody told me Bill Nelson was here. I don't know if he is or not, but if he's not, tell him I mentioned his name. And if he is, he'll know I did. *[Laughter]*

It's wonderful to see Elaine Bloom and Ron Silver again. And Dante, they told me you were 80 years old, but I don't believe it. It's just another one of your lies, the way politicians are. *[Laughter]* It looks good on you. It looks great on you. You should have been—they had this great story in the New York Times Sunday Magazine—I don't know if you saw it—about how old isn't old anymore. And it really was about, I hope, all